1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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DELIVERY.—Only females are present at childbirth, the elder or more experienced ones acting as midwives. The methods employed to hasten delivery are in general very brutal, and they lead occasionally to the death of both mother and child. One of the befriended persons present severs the navel string with the aid of a sharpened piece of bamboo or a wood splinter, and then ties it with a cotton thread. In virtue of this act she will henceforth be considered as a blood relation to the newborn child and the latter's parents as well, and they call each other reciprocally *lapya* or *lakpya*. This corresponds loosely to the *compadre* and *comadre* system of the Ladinos. The *lapya* appears to have been limited in former days to the Miskito, but lately it has spread to the other tribes of the Mosquito Coast—Sumu, Rama, and Paya. The afterbirth is buried by one of the women as soon as it is expelled. The same is also done with the umbilical cord, in order to prevent pigs, dogs, or other animals from eating it up, which may result in sickness or death for the baby.

COUVADE.—Traces of the couvade may be observed among both Miskito and Sumu. During the first days of the newborn child the father will refrain from hard work and keep out of the bush. He will also abstain from certain foods and from salt and chili pepper. The mother also has to keep a diet. Exquemelin (Engl. edit.: 253) denies the existence of the couvade among the Miskito, but the actual facts have probably escaped his observation. This author states that the mother bathes her baby at the next river, wraps it up in a *calalas* (=*kwala* "cloth") and then follows her usual occupation. According to my various informants the bath of the mother and the child is postponed until the third day after delivery. But the mother is considered impure for from one to two weeks longer. After that period has elapsed she may return to her husband, who prepares a feast with food and drink in honor of the baby and the *lapya*.

BIRTHMARKS.—Birthmarks (M. and S.: *wasaki*) are ascribed by both tribes to the failure of the mother to obtain during pregnancy a certain article of food for which she had a vehement desire. The Indians supply, if possible, a woman *encinta* with any kind of food for which she may ask. If during that state she should have a craving for a slice of pineapple the husband will do his utmost to procure the fruit. Should the prospective mother learn that it is impossible to obtain it, and then thoughtlessly pass her hand over her head, breast, or arm, the child would be born in due time with the mark of a pineapple at the corresponding part of the body. A somewhat similar belief exists among the ignorant people in large areas in Europe.

A certain skin disease is found sometimes on the newly born child, and is known among the Miskito by the name *dus arbias* "gnawing of trees." Its origin is traced to the fact that the mother, while *encinta*,

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826 heard the peculiar sound produced by two trees rubbing against each other during high wind.

842 [847] [165] STERILITY AND ABORTION.—Sterility is considered a disgrace, and the average husband will abandon his wife if she is unable to bear children. Abortion and prevention of pregnancy are accomplished by the use of certain herbs. In general the Indian woman is very prolific, but infant mortality is also very high.

847 INFANTICIDE.—In former days babies of the female sex were often exposed and left to die, as they were supposed to bring ill luck. Male children are always received with great joy, which the father manifests by shooting off his gun. Deformed children were buried alive in olden days, as they were supposed to be possessed by an evil spirit, or to have been begotten by such one. A similar belief is held by many other tribes in both Americas and accounts for the total absence or scarcity of crippled persons in such regions.

847 845 Twins were also exposed, as they were said to be a proof of the wife's disloyalty to her husband; the latter considered that only one of the two infants could possibly be his. If twins were of different sex the female was always killed. Lehmann (c: I, 405) states among the Miskito the red dog (*pdûan*) is the master of the twins, and that for that reason these Indians whip dogs at the birth of twins (*pdûnki*), but this report needs confirmation.

854 [142] CHILD CARRYING.—The women carry their children in a long cloth which they sling over the back, tying the two ends together in front at the breast. This way the mother is not prevented from following her usual occupation, as both her hands are left free, while the child is firmly secured in a safe and comfortable position. The prevalence of bowlegs among these Indians may possibly be ascribed to this manner of carrying the infants.

855 CARE OF CHILDREN.—The Indian child receives little attention from its parents, yet it rarely cries. The parents have, however, great patience toward their offspring, and they seldom chastise a naughty child. Should they, however, lose their patience and seize the whip, they may administer fearful beatings, but such cases are extremely rare. Lullaby songs are rarely heard, but the parents tell their offspring fables, legends, and fairy tales.

862 The last child is not generally weaned until the fourth year and sometimes even longer. I have observed cases among the Miskito where the young boys alternated their mother's breast with their father's tobacco pipe.

868 EDUCATION.—As the child grows up it is made acquainted with the occupations of its parents. The boy accompanies his father on hunting and fishing journeys as soon as he is strong enough to do so. The father makes toys for him, as diminutive canoes and paddles; later he obtains small bows and arrows in order to practice shooting at birds